Library and information skills for researchers

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
This module aims to ensure that post-graduate research students can evaluate the nature and extent of their information need, understand the purpose, scope and appropriateness of a variety of information sources and organise retrieved information effectively.

RATIONALE
Today’s information environment is characterised by the proliferation of both information resources and their means of access. It is essential that research students have the capacity to effectively navigate and exploit this environment. This module will provide a framework which enables researchers to retrieve and organise the many and varied resources required for the successful and timely completion of their research.

AIMS and OBJECTIVES
This module will assist researchers to identify, access, locate, analyse and organise information and its sources.

PREREQUISITES
None

LENGTH and MODE
This module will be presented over the equivalent of 18 hours in mixed mode delivery.

STRUCTURE and SEQUENCE
This module will be organised to meet the needs of individual research students. It will include a large practical component.
SPECIFIC CONTENT and TOPICS

1. **Using library resources and services effectively** (3 hours)
   This module will provide an overview of print and electronic resources available through ACU Libraries, including how to select appropriate resources for a particular information need. It will introduce research students to a variety of Library services, including:
   - The Library web site
   - Books, journals, statistical information, legislation, theses, newspapers, etc.
   - The catalogue
   - Databases, ejournals and ebooks
   - Document delivery and postal services
   - Information services, including Ask a Librarian
   - Reciprocal borrowing

2. **Expert information retrieval** (4 hours)
   This module will provide detailed instruction on preparing effective search strategies, including advanced searching techniques. The module will cover electronic databases, indexes and abstracting services, full text databases, e-journal collections and e-books.

3. **Searching the Internet** (3 hours)
   This module will examine the Internet environment including how to use search engines and metasearch engines to search the WWW effectively. It will also cover “grey literature” and the open access movement and will provide students with strategies to critically evaluate the information they find.

4. **Current awareness strategies** (4 hours)
   This module will provide researchers with the means to keep up to date with the published literature in their field as well as to set up current awareness alert profiles in electronic resources. It will also cover citation searching to identify who’s citing whom and to assist in tracking the academic debate in their area of interest.

5. **Using EndNote to manage information** (4 hours)
   This module will introduce researchers to the EndNote reference management software. It will show them how to set up and maintain an EndNote library, import references from databases, insert appropriately formatted citations and references into their thesis and produce a final bibliography.

TEACHING and LEARNING STRATEGIES
A variety of teaching and learning methods may be used, including: lectures, small group tutorials, seminars, discussions and on-line delivery as appropriate.

GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES
Students completing this module will be able to *locate, organise, analyse, synthesise and evaluate information* (ACU Graduate Attribute 8), and in particular they will be better able to:

1. Differentiate between, and value, the range of potential sources of information available to them;
2. Construct and implement search strategies in selected resources using appropriate commands;
3. Examine and compare information from various sources to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and bias;
4. Recognise the changing nature of information and the information environment and use alerts, and other means, to keep their knowledgebase current;
5. Organise and manage their information using EndNote.

**RESOURCES NEEDED**
A staff member from the core group will be required to assume responsibility for the coordination and delivery of the module across all campuses – additional staff may be co-opted relevant to their expertise as required. The library will assist in responding to the needs of students by making available resources and references including those listed below.

**ASSESSMENT**
There is no formal assessment for this module but attendance and completion of the module will be recorded in the student’s research training portfolio.

**KEY REFERENCES**
None

This module was prepared using: